


12-31-2008

No Disneyland: Biography and Bibliography of Rabbi Shimeon Brisman (1920–2004)

Roger S. Kohn

Library of Congress, rogerkohn@hotmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://ajlpublishing.org/jl>

 Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Information Literacy Commons](#), [Jewish Studies Commons](#), and the [Reading and Language Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kohn, Roger S.. 2008. "No Disneyland: Biography and Bibliography of Rabbi Shimeon Brisman (1920–2004)." *Judaica Librarianship* 14: 57-79. doi:10.14263/2330-2976.1074.

No Disneyland:

Biography and Bibliography of Rabbi Shimeon Brisman (1920–2004)

ROGER S. KOHN

In Israel, people asked me: Did you see Elath? I told them that I have been living in Los Angeles for several years and have not seen Disneyland yet. Disneyland, they said, is different. It is hard to get in.

Shimeon Brisman, 1963

ABSTRACT

Shimeon Brisman (1920–2004), a Holocaust survivor, lived in Los Angeles from 1954 to 1988. This article focuses first on his efforts to build a strong Jewish Studies collection at the University of California, Los Angeles. These efforts began with the purchase of the stock of a defunct bookstore in Jerusalem in the early 1960s, and they continued through significant and strategic purchases that he made over the following two decades. Brisman, a very private person, is remembered by friends and colleagues, and their recollections reveal glimpses of his personality. Brisman, the scholar, is remembered via an analysis of the three volumes of his series titled “Jewish Research Literature,” along with the reviews that the volumes received shortly after their publication. Brisman’s contribution to the field of Jewish bibliography was a unique and enduring one.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Shimeon Brisman was born in 1920 in Poland and died in 2004 in Brooklyn, New York. A teenager at the beginning of World War II, he escaped Poland for Lithuania, traveled through Russia and Japan, and found refuge in Shanghai in 1941. He left China in 1947 for the United States and became an American citizen in 1962. This brief sketch of Brisman’s life could illustrate the destiny of

some of the European Jews who survived World War II and were able to rebuild their lives in the New World.¹

Brisman is best known to Judaica librarians for the three volumes he published under the series titled “Jewish Research Literature” from 1977 to 2000. Volume One, *A History and Guide to Judaic Bibliography*, was first published in 1973 in a preliminary edition of forty-five copies, modestly printed in Jerusalem, which was then revised and republished in New York by Hebrew Union College Press in 1977. Volume Two, *A History and Guide to Judaic Encyclopedias and Lexicons*, appeared ten years later, also under the imprint of Hebrew Union College Press. Thirteen years later, Brisman published Volume Three, *A History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances, Part 1, Dictionaries* (Ktav, 2000).

While researching and publishing, Rabbi Shimeon Brisman worked in American Jewish libraries. Upon his arrival in the United States, Brisman first worked at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York (1947–1948), then spent six years as a book dealer, publisher, editor in Yiddish and Hebrew in New York and later in St. Louis, Missouri. He moved to the West Coast in 1954 and became the assistant librarian at the Jewish Community Library in Los Angeles. Brisman joined the staff of the UCLA Research Library on August 1, 1962, as Near Eastern Cataloger, serving as Hebrew and Yiddish cataloger; a year later he was appointed Hebraica and Judaica bibliographer. (His title was changed to Jewish Studies Bibliographer, effective August 1, 1970.) In 1967, Brisman was appointed Lecturer in Hebrew Bibliography and Methods of Research for the graduate students in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA. He remained at UCLA for twenty-six years until his retirement, effective July 1, 1988.²

BUILDING A STRONG JEWISH STUDIES COLLECTION AT UCLA

Brisman quickly acquired the respect and the confidence of his superiors, the various UCLA Librarians under whom he served and of the Jewish Studies faculty for whom he developed the Library’s collections. Page Ackerman, Associate University Librarian, praised Brisman in 1971 because he “functions not only as cataloger, but also as bibliographer, lecturer and reference resource person in the general field of Jewish Studies.” When Dr. Felix Guggenheim donated an incunable, *Perush ha-Torah* by Moshe ben Nahman (Nahmanides), printed in

¹ Most of the biographical information on Shimeon Brisman comes from his application to the National Endowment for the Humanities, UCLA Archives, RS 510, box 1, folder “Jewish Studies 1973–1984”; from an interview with his older son, Dov Brisman, conducted in April 2004; and from Hirsch (2001).

² NEH application in RS 510, box 1, folder “Jewish Studies 1973–1984”; Brisman (1969), p. 43; Hirsch (2001).

Lisbon in 1489, Ackerman (who had become University Librarian) thanked the donor for his “interest in the UCLA Library and the joy you have given Mr. Brisman.” In 1979, Robert Vosper, UCLA Librarian Emeritus, conducted a survey, *UCLA Library Collection: A Profile*, and in the chapter dealing with the Jewish Studies Collection, he wrote, “[The] growth of this collection is one of the dramatic success stories of the UCLA Library.” For Vosper, Brisman “is almost revered by the faculty and deserves full credit for the power of the collections,” and he provided statements from Arnold Band, Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature, who considered Brisman’s evaluation of the collections “somewhat modest . . . of North American academic libraries only Harvard is superior.”³

The collaboration of the Hebrew Program faculty, and especially of Arnold Band, was crucial toward securing the acquisition of a large collection, the stock of the Bamberger & Wahrmann bookstore in Jerusalem, at the beginning of the Brisman’s tenure at UCLA. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the UCLA library was not able to keep pace with the expansion of the Hebrew Program, which then consisted of four full-time faculty and three part-time professors of Hebrew. The story of the purchase of Bamberger & Wahrmann is well documented and Brisman himself devoted about about half of his *Jewish Book Annual* article on UCLA’s Jewish Studies collections (1969) to this purchase.

The Bamberger & Wahrmann bookstore, founded in Frankfurt am Main (Germany) in 1921, relocated to Jerusalem in 1933, became the leading Hebraica and Judaica bookstore in Israel in the early 1950s. It acquired its iconic cultural status both through its association with Ḥayim Naḥman Bialik, publishing the jubilee edition of the poet’s works in 1923, and through the quality of the catalogs it produced for the antiquarian book trade. The intellectual elite of the young State of Israel met at the store on King George Street; David Ben Gurion and Itzhak Ben-Zvi were among its customers.

Following the death of the original partners and its leading bibliographer, Shmuel Wahrmann in 1961, the store fell on hard times. When Arnold Band came to Jerusalem in Fall of 1962 for a sabbatical to conduct research and interview Shmuel Yosef Agnon, it was run by Shmuel’s cousin, Oscar Wahrmann. Band was “told confidentially that the Wahrmann family want[ed] to close the store and sell the stock in bloc.” Band reported to the chairman of his department that “this is the library we have been dreaming of,” and alerted the Near Eastern Bibliographer, Miriam Lichtheim. Band conducted the negotiation at an “American dizzying pace” according to Wahrmann, and convinced Vosper to dispatch Brisman to Jerusalem. Brisman spent two weeks in Jerusalem in mid-January 1963, evaluating the collection, negotiating for two full days with the children of Shmuel Wahrmann on the price and the conditions of the sale of the bookstore’s stock. University Librarian Robert Vosper awarded Brisman an

³ Hirsch (2001); Letter of P. Ackerman to Dr. F. Guggenheim, dated November 20, 1973, RS 499 box 5, folder 8 “Gifts Gr-Gz, 1950–1983”; and estimate by Sh. Brisman, dated November 7, 1973, RS 510, box 13 “Getty/Vosper Collection Evaluation 1979.”

“uncommon merit increase” for having performed “with precision and success” when he “took on a major task involving complex negotiations in Israel with lawyers, government officials, and experienced book dealers.”⁴

The negotiations with the Wahrmann family were kept confidential, while at the same time Brisman met with librarians in Jerusalem from the Jewish and National University Library, which had a de facto veto on such a sizeable exportation of books from Israel. After Brisman’s departure, Professor Band became embroiled in a polemic with leading intellectuals and several librarians (in particular with Kurt Worman, then the Director of JNUL) when the news of the sale reached the newspapers in early February 1963. In his correspondence with officials at UCLA, Band disclosed who he believed was behind the press coverage:

Prof. [Gershom] Scholem . . . who wields more power here than the president of the university, went on a towering rage . . . he pounced upon Worman for not telling him . . . Scholem . . . began screeching about American imperialism . . . tried to get Ben-Gurion to stop the shipment . . . continues to rage while everyone has almost forgotten the incident.

The only one still foaming at the mouth is Professor G. Scholem, the famous expert on Jewish mysticism (which fits his personality so well) who has terrified the entire academic community here for thirty years. It was he who tipped off the newspapers and tried to whip up the waves of opposition. . . . After the initial attempt at blocking the shipment failed so miserably, nobody thinks of action. Several newspaper articles subsequent to the initial burst have been considerably milder . . . I now look upon the entire affair with extreme detachment, at times amused, at times bored.

Despite this affected detachment, UCLA officials nevertheless realized the emotional toll that this purchase had on Professor Band. The University Chancellor, Franklin D. Murphy, acknowledged the University’s obligation to Band in a personal letter, soon after the books had left Israel for California:

All of us are deeply in your debt not only for having ferreted out this possibility, but most importantly, for having helped us, in a coura-

⁴ Brisman (1969), pp. 44–46; ‘Etin (1959); Arnold Band to Wolf Leslau, December 4, 1962, RS 401, box 46, folder 33 “Library, 1960–1963”; Saraf (1963); *UCLA Librarian* (1993), p. 8: “Shimeon Brisman, a magnificent bibliographer, came to Jerusalem to finish the negotiations”; *News Bulletin, Friends of the UCLA Library* (1963), p. 4: “Mr. Shimeon Brisman, the Library’s brilliant young specialist in Hebraica and Judaica, was dispatched immediately to Jerusalem to analyze the collection and negotiate” (quoting from Vosper’s *Annual Report* for 1962–1963, RS 266, box 1 “News bulletins, 1961–66”). The report of Brisman to Vosper on his mission in Jerusalem, dated January 16, 1963, is found in RS 401, box 46, folder 33 “Library, 1960–1963.” See *UCLA Librarian* (1963b), pp. 141–142 on the merit award.

geous and determined manner to carry the project through, even at the cost of some personal emotional trauma.⁵

Brisman worked under Band's guidance while providing a crucial evaluation of the collection to his employers in California. He steered clear of the polemics in Jerusalem between two generations of scholars, between an American-educated visiting professor and the academic establishment in Jerusalem, dominated by the German-educated faculty.

Once it arrived at UCLA, the Bamberger & Wahrmann Collection was renamed the Theodore E. Cummings Collection, in honor of the president of the Board of Directors of Giant Markets, who later served as the U.S. ambassador to Austria. In his letter to Cummings in late January 1964, Chancellor Murphy wrote, "The total collection will be housed in one place." Six months later, at a time when the Jewish Studies collection was expanding beyond the initial Cummings Collection, Brisman warned Vosper about the workability of such a promise. He suggested a variety of ways to make the gifts of Theodore and Suzanne Cummings more tangible—suggestions that were implemented by the Library. To take such steps, he wrote,

will be an important public relations act to be able to direct interesting parties to a specific group of books carrying the name of the donor. From my experience, I have noticed that people become disappointed when they are told that we cannot show them the Cummings Collection because the books are distributed in various areas. Some leave with the impression that this entire gift is a myth.

However, the University was never able to fully address this issue in a satisfactory way for the donors.⁶

In developing the Hebraica and Judaica collections at UCLA, Brisman paid attention to both current and retrospective acquisitions. For the first ten years of his tenure, Brisman benefited from the PL480 Israel Program, which enabled the library to acquire current Israeli publications. He happened to be in Israel when the program was first interrupted and then terminated. In 1974, he wrote:

⁵ "Sifriyah Yerushalmit hashuvah nimkerah le-Artsot ha-Berit," unsigned article in *Ha-Aretz*, February 7, 1963; exchange of correspondence between Band and Getzel Kressel in *Davar*, 15 and 25 March 1963; letter of Arnold Band to Kurt Worman, dated February 10, 1963; attacks on Scholem in Band's letter to Bob [Robert Vosper], dated "Wednesday 21 [February] 1963," and in his letter to Carlo [Golino], dated February 24, 1963; carbon copy of the letter of Franklin D. Murphy to Band, dated April 1, 1963. All of these materials are found in RS 401, box 46, folder 33 "Library, 1960–1963."

⁶ Letter of Chancellor Murphy to Theodore Cummings, January 24, 1963, in RS 377, box 421, Folder "Jewish Studies, 1991–1993"; memorandum from Brisman to Vosper, July 2, 1964, in RS 447, box 5, folder "Cummings 1968–1984." In addition, RS 377, box 338, contains a folder, "Cummings Collection 1981, 1985, 1993," regarding the controversy with the Cummings family.

The PL-480 Israel program was interrupted during September–November 1972. We immediately switched over to a private dealer for the duration of the interruption. This experience turned out to be beneficial for us, for seven months later, when the program was finally stopped, we were ready to continue our acquisitions of current Israel publications through private channels. The flow of Israeli publications has since the end of PL-480 Israel program not been interrupted (except for a brief period during last year's October war).⁷

Trips to the East Coast and Israel were instrumental for Brisman's retrospective acquisitions. Early on, in 1966, Brisman acquired for UCLA the "personal collection of over 3,000 volumes of Rabbi Yehuda Rubinstein, consisting particularly of Hebrew bibliography, Hassidism, Hungarian and Galican [sic] Hebraica and including some manuscripts and autographs." In his report for fiscal year 1977–1978, Brisman noted that he acquired "about seventy volumes of rare Hebraica (including several manuscripts) from a private collector in New York . . . The printed volumes [include] beautiful examples of Hebrew printing from the presses of Amsterdam, Venice and Constantinople . . . the manuscripts are mainly from Yemenite origin." At the invitation of his publisher, Brisman visited New York in February 1979, and "the visit resulted in the acquisition of about 200 volumes of Hagadot (Passover liturgies), bibliographies, and Holocaust materials (mainly memorial volumes)."⁸

Overall, the growth of UCLA's Jewish Studies collection in the second half of the twentieth century was dramatic. "When the first Near Eastern bibliographer and cataloger [Miriam Lichtheim] arrived in 1956, she found on her desk one Hebrew volume ready to be processed. Ten years later, the Jewish Studies Collection counted among its holdings close to 40,000 Hebraica volumes, "wrote Brisman in his article describing the collections that he developed. Later in the same article, he estimated that by the end of 1968 the collections had grown to 50,000 Hebraica and 30,000 Judaica volumes. At the end of 2005, it had increased to in excess of 170,000 volumes."⁹

Brisman helped to develop Judaica collections at other U.S. academic libraries. He served as a consultant to the University of Utah Library in 1970, and Washington University Libraries purchased nearly 3,600 volumes from Brisman in 1972, most likely duplicates to the UCLA Hebraica and Judaica collection. Half of these volumes were in Hebrew, including 900 volumes of rare bibliography, sever-

⁷ RS 510, box 12, folder "Bibliographers' annual reports 1973–1974."

⁸ RS 510, box 10, folder "Special funds 1961–1970"; memorandum from Norman Dudley, head of the Acquisitions Department, to the University Librarian, Robert Vosper, dated October 24, 1966. The Rubinstein collection is the first item on the list of acquisitions which were to be funded. See also RS 510, box 12, folder "Bibliographers annual reports 1977–1978," and in the same box, folder "Bibliographers' annual reports 1978–1980."

⁹ Brisman (1969); *UCLA Library Collections and Internet Resources in Jewish Studies* [website].

al hundred works of Yiddish fiction, and several hundred rare volumes, among them an early printed copy of the *Kuzari* and sixteenth-century Italian Bibles.¹⁰

Brisman generously provided access to the collections that he built, regardless of researchers' affiliations. For example, David Sheby, an engineer in Cherry Hill, NJ, was researching the origins of his family name. He acknowledged Brisman's assistance and noted that the UCLA Library provided "information beyond my wildest dreams" (1978). When Norman Tarnor, who had taught Hebrew language and literature for thirty years at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, translated and published the teḥinah prayer written by a Sarah bas Tovim, he thanked "Dr. Simon Brisman, the Jewish Bibliographer, for his kind help in locating the item as well as for several illuminating comments and suggestions" (Tarnor, 1991). The volume that Tarnor used was uncataloged at the time and Brisman located it for him.

SHIMEON BRISMAN, THE MAN

When I contacted Brisman while preparing this article, he responded as follows:

I realized that you are planning to compile some kind of a Brisman bio-bibliography. I am sorry to disappoint you by declining your invitation to cooperate with you in this endeavor. Neither my biography nor my bibliography are important enough to be immortalized. (Letter from Shimeon Brisman to the author, March 17, 1998.)

Shimeon Brisman had an impeccable rabbinic education. He started studying with his grandfather, Dov Aaron Brisman (1863–1941), in Kolno (near Yomza, Poland), at the age of seven. His grandfather was the president of the rabbinical court (*Rosh bet-Din*) in the town for close to fifty years (Shimeon Brisman later published one of his works). Brisman went from Kolno to study with Aryeh Leib Yucht (1889 or 1890–1948) in Bialystok, from there to the yeshiva of Rabbi Elchanan Bunim Wasserman (1875–1941) in Baranowice, and later to the yeshiva of Rabbi Shimeon Shkop (1860–1940) in Grodno. All three were revered rabbinical authorities before the Holocaust. Brisman received formal rabbinical ordination from the head of the rabbinical court of Warsaw, Rabbi Shlomo David Kahana (1869–1953), in 1938. He received additional rabbinical ordinations in 1946, from Rabbi Hayim Shmulevitz, the head of the Mir Yeshiva in Shanghai, and from Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi, the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community of Shanghai.¹¹

¹⁰ *UCLA Librarian* (1970), p. 65; e-mail from Jill Storm to the author, dated March 30, 2007.

¹¹ Dov Brisman interview, April 2004. The book that Brisman published is *Be'er mayim: be'ur nifla' al Bereshit Rabah* (2001 or 2002), and it includes a page in memory of Brisman's wife. Brisman described his education slightly differently in his 1976 NEH application: he records there a high school diploma (*matura*) from the Taḥkemoni gymnasium (in fact a rabbinical seminary) in Warsaw in 1938; see RS 510, box 1, folder "Jewish Studies 1973–1984."

The administrative files of the UCLA Library offer few glimpses of Brisman's personality. In the conclusion to his annual report for fiscal year 1978/79, Brisman wrote (under "Thoughts and Concerns"):

I am now completing my seventeenth year of Library service at UCLA. In Hebrew folklore the number seventeen is equal to the word "good." Looking back at the work accomplished at the Library during the last seventeen years makes me feel "good"; looking at the future, I become concerned. If the developments of the last few years are any indication, we should all be concerned about the future.

He lamented an automated circulation system "that makes it harder to check out books" and a "security system that makes it easier to carry out unchecked books." Cataloging was slowed down by the cooperative cataloging system, and "we keep adding expensive books to our stacks but let them unprotected to be stolen or mutilated." He concluded by asking, "Is it not about time to stop and examine all these recent 'innovations' to see how they are working in reality?"¹²

Rather, it is from the Jewish Studies faculty that we are able to get a clearer picture of Brisman, the person. Arnold Band wrote:

[I] was instrumental in bringing him to UCLA in 1962. Late that same year, we worked together in Jerusalem to obtain the Bamberger and Wahrmann collection. Subsequently, he was a good friend for many years. My elder son, incidentally, studied Gemara with him on Saturday afternoons.

Professor Herbert Davidson remembered Brisman as

a very private person and though we were old friends, he talked very little about himself. Example, for years I thought that he was a member of the Mir Yeshiva when he went with it to Japan. Once, though, he mentioned that he was no longer a Yeshiva student at the time and joined the Yeshiva group as a way of getting out of Poland. He once mentioned to me that he was away in a yeshiva when he became bar mitzvah, and the recognition of the occasion was receipt of a pair of tephillin. Period.

Philip Miller, Librarian of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion's Klau Library in New York, remembered him in his later years:

After his retirement and his move to Brooklyn, I would see him whenever he came into this Library to do his research . . . It was all business. He would come in, very organized, with a clear idea on his "game plan." We did shmooze from time to time, but it was never personal.

¹² RS 510, box 12, folder "Bibliographers' annual reports 1978-1980."

While my contact was limited, it was always most pleasant. He knew and understood the workings of a library and hence he never put me, my staff or me, under any strain, like “I need it yesterday!”¹³

In a tongue-in-cheek interview for the *UCLA Librarian* (1993), reporting about his trip to London and Jerusalem in January 1963, Brisman confided that he almost shook the hand of the President of the United States . . . at Madame Tussaud’s Museum. In Israel,

people asked me: Did you see Elath? I told them that I have been living in Los Angeles for several years and have not seen Disneyland yet. Disneyland, they said, is different. It is hard to get in. Even Khrushchev did not make it, whereas Elath is easily accessible. One has to cross only a small piece of desert. They convinced me, and I promised them: I shall return.

What emerges from much of Brisman’s correspondence is how deeply immersed he was in the rabbinic tradition, freely quoting Hebrew texts and traditions. Like the authors of traditional rabbinical responsa, Brisman invoked the pressure of daily activities (*dohak ha-zeman*) for delays in responding to his correspondents: In a letter to the founding editor of this journal, Bella Hass Weinberg he wrote that he had planned to write to her in 1983, but “unfortunately, the pressure of keeping up with daily routines related to my job forced me, at that time, to curtail letter-writing” (Brisman, 1988a). In his letter on the occasion of receiving the AJL Reference Book Award (1988b), Brisman began his text by “it is an old Jewish custom to make a siyum upon the completion of writing a Torah scroll or upon the completion of studying a Talmudic tractate. Usually, a community-wide celebration follows the siyum ceremony. However, there are no celebrations prescribed by tradition for the completion of a volume by an individual author.” He poignantly concluded, “I pray that I be granted the privilege to complete the projects I have already begun and to be able to start and finish new ones. All for the sake of Lilmod U-lelamed.”¹⁴

THE SCHOLARLY PRODUCTION OF SHIMEON BRISMAN AND ITS CRITICAL RECEPTION

Prior to his arrival in California in 1954, Brisman “engaged in editing and preparing for publication works in Hebrew and Yiddish.” In a 1976 grant application he recorded five publications, two published in the early 1950s, and three

¹³ E-mail from Arnold Band to the author, September 19, 1997; e-mail from H. Davidson to the author, February 5, 2005; e-mail from Philip E. Miller to the author, February 23, 1998.

¹⁴ Brisman (1988a); Brisman (1988b).

bibliographies published during his tenure at the Jewish Community Library of Los Angeles (1954–1962), as well as “numerous articles, studies, and book reviews in various languages on bibliographical and literary themes” which I was not able to trace down.¹⁵

It is not clear when Brisman started his multi-volume work, *Jewish Research Literature*, but two sources suggest that he did so circa 1958. In the experimental edition of 1973, Brisman wrote that “the collecting of the material began some 15 years ago during a summer course in library science. Several years later, it became the basis for a course in Hebrew bibliography and methods of research for graduate students” at UCLA. In the preface to Volume One, dated May 1976, he wrote “some eighteen years ago, the author began to collect material for a three-volume work to be entitled *Jewish Research Literature*. The actual writing—based in part on notes and on work done in the courses—was made possible by a grant of sabbatical leave” in Jerusalem during the academic year 1972–1973.¹⁶

The experimental edition of 1973 was received with enthusiasm. Robert Vosper, University Librarian wrote to Brisman (who was still enjoying his sabbatical in Jerusalem in June 1973) that he had received

the experimental edition of Part I of your Magnum Opus . . . very happily. This pleases me very much in many ways. It is a wonderful tribute to your learning and your industry and will I’m sure be a project in which both the University and the Library can take very great pride. One of the . . . great pleasures of my experience as a University Librarian is the experience and comradeship I have had with people such as yourself.¹⁷

Brisman noted this enthusiasm as a reason for the reedition in 1977 of Volume One, by Hebrew Union College Press (Cincinnati) and Ktav Publishing House (New York):

The volume [published in Jerusalem in 1973] was received with enthusiasm by the author’s colleagues in Israel and in the United States. The enthusiastic reception given the “Experimental Edition”

¹⁵ RS 510, box 1, folder “Jewish Studies 1973–1984”: the first title listed is *Perl fun undzer Toyre: margaliyot ha-Torah*, by D. Shaham, in which, according to Shimeon Brisman’s son Dov, Brisman contributed to the second part, *Shemot* [Exodus], and the beginning of *Bamidbar* [Numbers]. I was not able to trace in any library catalog the biography of Shimon Dov Anolik, published in Tel Aviv in 1951, which Brisman lists as his second work. At the Jewish Community Library, Brisman worked on three bibliographies, on Jewish sociology (1958), on rabbinica (1959), and on periodicals (1960).

¹⁶ The title “Sources of Jewish Information, I” appears before “Jewish Research Literature, History and Guide” in the experimental edition of 1973, and may have been the original title of the series, see “Introduction and Acknowledgments,” where the third sentence announces that when the three parts are “completed, it will constitute the first volume in a series of works on the ‘Sources of Jewish Information’” (p. ii).

¹⁷ RS 499, box 2, folder “Gifts, BRA-BRY, 1957–1985”: letter from Robert Vosper, June 11, 1973.

encouraged the author to prepare this entirely revised and enlarged edition for the general public (Brisman 1977, p. x).

To compare the 1973 Experimental Edition with the 1977 edition is to appreciate how consistent Brisman was in realizing his project and how he was able to bring it safely to completion. In the revised and enlarged 1977 edition, Brisman did more than polish the work started in Jerusalem. The Experimental Edition was a rough draft, a roneotyped document where the table of contents did not match the actual titles of the chapters. In contrast, the Volume One published in 1977 benefited from the attention of copy editors, and it has a more readable layout. Brisman conformed more fully to the authorized form for the names of authors, and standardized the format for all chapters. Each chapter began with a listing of its contents, in italics. There were now some reproductions, in reduced format, of a few of the works analyzed. At the end of each chapter except the last, the reader could refer to a chronological list of all the works reviewed in the chapter.

The page-and-a-half “Introduction and Acknowledgments” in the Experimental Edition (1973) was transformed into a substantial “Preface” in 1977 (pp. ix–xi). Brisman used there the text of the narrative that he had drafted the previous year for his grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities, for work in Jerusalem on Volume Two.¹⁸ Jewish literature, he wrote, began with the Bible, slowly developing in Palestine, when the “Jewish nation . . . led a more or less independent life, “but when that nation went into exile its literary activity accelerated,” still using Hebrew, but also other Jewish languages and Western European languages later. In the next paragraph, Brisman singled out A. M. Habermann’s estimate that 140,000 Hebraica books had been published since 1475, of which 80,000 were printed since 1850, reviewed the history of his project and how it both answered a need and generated interest. Only toward the close of his preface did Brisman state the obvious, namely, that his work “has no antecedent in Jewish literature.” The Preface concluded with a request that readers bring to the author’s attention any lacunae and errors.

The acknowledgments are different between the Experimental Edition of 1973 and the revised edition of 1977, revealing differing priorities. First to be acknowledged in 1973 were Vosper and Ackerman, who “were instrumental in making a dream come true.” This may be an indication of the major role that Brisman’s supervisors played in enabling him to devote some of his time at UCLA to his project, by liberally endorsing his repeated requests for leaves and sabbaticals. The next person to be thanked was Jonas C. Greenfield (1926–1995), a professor of ancient Semitic languages at the Hebrew University, formerly from California, who read the “first draft manuscript and offered numerous suggestions.” Librarians at academic institutions in Jerusalem were next, before “finally, my wife, Sara, who participated in this project from its inception, was

¹⁸ Application in: RS 510, box 1, folder “Jewish Studies 1973–1984.”

the first to read the manuscript, and assisted constantly in solving complicated problems connected with this work and in suggesting stylistic changes . . .”

The 1977 edition is still dedicated to “Sara and the children,” and she is the first one in the list of acknowledgments. Brisman then thanks by name three “Israeli scholars and bibliographers,” Meir Benayahu (1926–), Getzel Kressel (1911–1986), and Shlomo Shunami (1897–1984), who suggested many sources. Faculty members and academic librarians in California are thanked next for suggestions, but one person stands out, Richard Zumwinkle (1924–1992), a fellow bibliographer and reference librarian at UCLA, who “carefully read and corrected the entire final draft.”

In comparing the Experimental and the Revised editions, some facts become evident. The first five chapters were basically the same in both editions, with only minor changes. At the beginning of Chapter Six in the Experimental Edition, Brisman warned that “bibliographical information and description of some periodic publications discussed in this chapter, especially of the more recent ones, had to remain incomplete due to technical difficulties encountered while in process of preparing the chapter. A few had to be left out entirely for the same reason,” and a similar note accompanied Chapter Seven.

Both Chapter Six, on bibliographical periodicals, and Chapter Seven, on indexes, were heavily rewritten and the organization of their contents was made clearer, with more explicit sub-chapters instead of a straight chronological narrative, as in the first five chapters.

In the 1977 volume, Brisman inaugurated a paradigm which he retained in the two subsequent volumes: the narrative was made as straightforward and interesting as possible, and more technical information and discussions were moved to the footnotes. As a result, the overall number of footnotes almost doubled between the two editions. For each and every book described, Brisman offered a well-documented history of the publication, stressing how it fits in a chronology of similar works of the same type, evaluating its importance for scholarship without glossing over its limitations.

As an example, we can compare the treatments of the periodical *Ḳiryat sefer: riv'on bibliyografi*, published in Jerusalem between 1924 and 2003 (now an online continuing resource), in the 1973 and the 1977 editions. In both editions, Brisman began his paragraph with a brief history of the Jewish National and University Library. The flow of information was the same, but many extraneous details found in the Experimental Edition (1973) were removed from the 1977 edition.¹⁹ A rather dry listing of the names of early collaborators was replaced by the phrase “edited by a group of scholars and bibliographers associated with both the Hebrew University and the National Library,” and the specific information was relegated to the footnotes. The text in the Experimental Edition was closer to a volume-by-volume and year-by-year detailed description,

¹⁹ For example, when Brisman introduced the name of the periodical, *Ḳiryat sefer*, he followed it with a long excursus on “a name earlier used by Bartoloccci [sic] and by Zeitlin for bibliographies of Hebraica, and by Scheinfinkel for a Hebrew bibliographical periodical”—background details that disappeared in 1977.

while in the 1977 edition superfluous details were either eliminated altogether, or reduced and placed as footnotes. The paragraph on *Ḳiryat sefer* ended with Brisman reporting on three critical reviews of the periodical, by A. Yaari (1899–1966), S. Eisenstadt (1923–), and G. Kressel (1911–1986). These were summarized in strict chronological order in the 1973 edition; this sequence was modified in the later edition, most likely to avoid finishing on a negative note: “Some of the weaknesses detected in the earlier volumes and pointed out by the reviewers were later overcome and corrected. A number of improvements were instituted” (emphasis added). Brisman concluded, “The statement that laid down the policy of the periodical in the first issue is still valid, and the initial structure, which was copied from the German-language bibliographical periodicals . . . is still the backbone of *Ḳiryat sefer*.” Altogether, Brisman’s account was factual, precise, and slightly detached, with the details on this publication kept within a broader perspective. Brisman presented facts, reported criticisms, and noted that weaknesses were partially corrected; however, he was reluctant to pass a formal or broad judgment as to whether or not this publication contributed significantly to scholarship. More interestingly, there was no reference to outside world events (the various waves of immigration to Palestine, the creation of the State of Israel) to explain certain features of *Ḳiryat sefer* that were noted in Brisman’s narrative.²⁰

Chapter Seven in the Experimental Edition (1973) “had to remain incomplete, due to technical difficulties” which were not explained, but most likely because Brisman was not able to analyze some recent indexes to Jewish periodicals. Four years later, the chapter was completed and “indexes selected for discussion in this chapter [were] divided into four groups,” with indexes to Jewish periodicals separated from the indexes to monographs. Although the Jewish periodicals were separated between “General” Jewish periodicals and those “devoted to Jewish history and culture in specific countries,” an extensive list, in smaller print, was devoted to “miscellaneous indexes to Hebraica and Judaica periodicals” that did not find their place in the first two categories.²¹

To the best of my knowledge, the Experimental Edition of 1973 was reviewed only in *Ḳiryat sefer* (1973, p. 8), which provided no more than a simple listing of the contents, and a one-sentence description of the project, a “historical and thematic review of Hebrew and Jewish bibliography until the present.” Likewise, four years later, most reviews of Volume One simply described the work, maybe mentioning that it was the first part of a three-volume series, and

²⁰ *Ḳiryat sefer* is discussed on pp. 190–194 of the Experimental Edition and pp. 157–160 of the 1977 edition.

²¹ Indexes were sketched in just a few pages in the Experimental Edition of 1973 (pp. 256–259), but they receive almost thirty pages in the 1977 edition (pp. 216–244). Plus, there are new indexes covered there that were not discussed in 1973. There were also many stylistic changes in Chapter Seven: an anecdote about Ḥayim Nahman Bialik asking for a citation from Chaikl [Khaykl] Lunsky, of the Strashun Library in Vilna was much shorter between the 1973 (p. 226–228) and 1977 (p. 211) editions, and was used to introduce different topics. The last chapter, Chapter Eight, “Miscellaneous Bibliographical Works,” had the same structure in both editions.

sometime listing the contents of the eight chapters. They rarely passed judgment.²²

Kressel (1979) summarized the contents of Volume One and expressed the hope that the volume would be translated in Hebrew, but he did not offer much in a way of a professional evaluation of Brisman's work. A more pointed review was that of Harry Goodman, of Rutgers University, who praised "Brisman's choice of material to be examined and commented on" as "eminently practical" and for taking "special care to point out the relative merits and weaknesses of each work. For most items discussed, the author has included a point-by-point enumeration of method of entry followed in the work." Goodman noted the importance of the footnotes, "which add much valuable information without burdening the casual reader." "Though intended as in introduction, the guide does assume a basic familiarity with the world of Judaic studies," he wrote, and "unlike many other manuals and treatises of bibliography, the guide is well written and, in many places, almost gripping as the author skillfully treats us to anecdotes and lively sidelights on the materials discussed" (Goodman, 1979).

Lawrence Marwick, of the Library of Congress, also praised Volume One as a "pioneering effort: it is . . . almost impossible to exaggerate the precious time and effort this indispensable work will save librarians, bibliographers, collectors, and researchers . . . and the plethora of sources it will bring to their attention. . . . Combining sound scholarship and linguistic expertise with pedagogic skills, Mr. Brisman rendered a non-glamorous subject both interesting and informative" (1979). Maurice Tuchman, of the Library of the Hebrew College, in Brookline, Massachusetts, took a different view: "While the author tries to point out the strengths and weaknesses of each work, the criticisms are sometimes superficial and it is not always clear how certain works have advanced the science of Jewish bibliography."²³

Volume Two, *A History and Guide to Judaic Encyclopedias and Lexicons*, was published ten years later. It has nine chapters instead of eight; it is much larger, with 502 pages (versus 352 pages in Volume One); but the structure of the two volumes is very similar. The abstract at the beginning of each chapter is now a composed text and not a mere listing of the works reviewed, and there is a more detailed chronological listing at the end. As in Volume One, the index covers the text and the footnotes. All in all, Volume Two has a high readability, the layout of the page is clear and the information is well organized, easily accessible from a cursory glance.

²² Marty Bloomberg's review (1979) was typical in this respect: "The text is easy to read, and many of the technical details have been placed in footnotes. This volume is a scholarly and highly specialized work of value to libraries with specialized or large collections of Judaic literature." The anonymous reviewer in *Booklist* (1979) noted, "There is no comparable history and guide in Judaic bibliography," while appreciating the "scholarly yet nontechnical guide" and praising it for its "thorough documentation . . . accurate index . . . [an] important reference tool . . . invaluable."

²³ See the Appendix for an "Annotated List of Critical Reviews of Shimeon Brisman's Works."

What makes Volume Two unique is its comprehensiveness. It contains “detailed bibliographical, biographical, historical, and genealogical data on more than 360 Judaic encyclopedias and lexicons, written in more than a dozen languages.” In his preface to Volume Two, Brisman contrasted between traditional scholarship in Hebrew and modern scholarship in Western languages. “Memorization of information was a common practice among Jewish students and scholars of antiquity, he wrote.” Scholars “at a moment’s notice, [could] recall verbatim rules, decisions, or sayings of earlier masters.” Because rabbinical literature grew exponentially, with some 15,000 books published in five centuries, some handbooks and encyclopedias began to appear in the eighteenth century. Modern encyclopedias first appeared in German, and later in the United States. Work on Volume Two began during a six-month leave in Jerusalem in 1978, followed by a three-month leave in 1982, and another eight-month leave in 1983–1984, under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Reviews of Volume Two were in general more detailed and more incisive than those for Volume One. They were lengthier and more analytical, and professional librarians or scholars involved in Jewish bibliography studies were well represented among the reviewers. Three substantive reviews will serve to illustrate the main points raised by most reviewers. Zachary Baker (1988) first described the contents of Volume Two, and then took the English-language *Jewish Encyclopedia* as an example of “the extraordinary wealth of detail contained in *Judaic Encyclopedias and Lexicons*.” Baker nevertheless pointed out a few omissions, especially in the chapter dealing with Diaspora communities, noted some problems with transliteration from Yiddish and Hebrew, and regretted that there was no Hebrew alphabet title index of the Hebrew and Yiddish works analyzed by Brisman. Baker emphasized the “impressive overall achievement” of Volume Two, “an indispensable component of any Judaica library’s reference collection and will be required reading for Judaica bibliography courses.” In conclusion, Baker contrasted the individual scholar’s ability to accomplish more than a committee or an editorial board.

Patrick Gordis (1994) approached Volume Two from the standpoint of a genealogist. He found the “most basic deficiency . . . [in] the lack of clear definitions” of a Jewish encyclopedia and why some books were excluded. Gordis was concerned with “the inordinate number of typographical errors and other relatively minor inaccuracies,” especially in the indexes. Gordis devoted the second part of his article to suggestions for additional titles to Volume Two, again from the point of view of a genealogist.

Finally, Shaul Stampfer’s review (1993), the shortest of the three, balanced praise and criticism like Baker. Like him, he recognized the book as “an indispensable guide,” but noted that the table of contents did not reveal the sub-headings of the chronological lists and summaries. “In short, this book is richer than a reading of its table of contents would indicate.” Brisman did not evade his responsibility to evaluate the works he analyzed, and Stampfer praised him for adhering “to high standards while at the same time being understanding of individuals who produced major works without the benefit of foundation grants or backup teams,” evoking the lone scholar of Baker’s review. Alone among all

the reviewers of Volume Two, Stampfer noted that the volume “is also very attractively laid out and printed.”

Volume Three, *History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances*, Part One, was published in 2000, thirteen years after Volume Two. In nine chapters, Brisman covers ten centuries of dictionaries of Hebrew and cognate languages produced all over the Jewish world. The structure of the work remains the same, with each chapter starting with a summary. The chronological lists are moved to the end of the narrative, before the footnotes for the nine chapters. Jean-Pierre Rothschild (2002) found the list hard to use, because it included additional subdivisions within the overall chronological framework. Compared to the first two volumes, there are several changes: “Preface and acknowledgments” occupy only fifteen lines on one page. “The only annoying aspect, not found in the first two volumes, is its crowded pages with small type and narrow margins,” noted David Kranzler in his review (2001). Another annoying aspect—which I have noted elsewhere (Kohn, 2007)—is that the index to Volume Three, Part One, does not include the footnotes, only the text. Volume Three was less widely reviewed than the previous ones, with critics focusing on the scope of the dictionaries analyzed and pointing out its omissions, especially in the decade immediately preceding the publication: the most recent book discussed by Brisman was published in 1993, some seven years earlier.

It is not known if Part Two of Volume Three, on concordances, will ever be published. In any case, for Brisman to have sustained his research and published three books over twenty-five years is a monumental accomplishment, and he was ready many times to abandon his project. In his retirement, he also kept busy with other projects, among them a dictionary of Hebrew printing (Brisman, 1988b, p. 185).

CONCLUSION

The contributions of Rabbi Shimeon Brisman are exceptional in many respects. Brisman was trained as a rabbi by the preeminent rabbinic authorities of the pre-World War II Poland. He preserved his heritage in Los Angeles, the entertainment capital with its Hollywood dream palaces and its Disneyland amusements. Brisman did not partake of California’s stereotypical hedonism; there was no Disneyland for him. Nevertheless, he seems to have been inspired by the entrepreneurial spirit of the “Wild West” in his two main undertakings. One was more immediate and locally focused—building library collections at UCLA. The other, was more broadly relevant—producing the three volumes of his magnum opus.

Thanks to the purchase of the stock of the Bamberger & Wahrman bookstore in Jerusalem, which became the Theodore E. Cummings Collection at UCLA, Brisman had a strong basis upon which to build the Jewish studies collections at a university that had almost no Hebrew books when he arrived. For almost three decades, Brisman as a bibliographer-cum-cataloger worked very hard to bring the collections at his California university to the level of the more established Judaica and Hebraica collections on the East Coast, and his achieve-

ments on this front compared very honorably, for example, with those of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, or the New York Public Library. Brisman was acutely aware of the importance of the Cummings Collection not only for his immediate constituents, the faculty and students at UCLA, but also for the entire Jewish community in Los Angeles and its immediate region.

The field of Jewish studies is uniquely enriched by the three volumes Brisman published. Usually a most modest person, Brisman remarked in the preface to the 1977 edition of Volume One—as we have noted—that his work “has no antecedent in Jewish literature.” There are indeed no works which can compare to what Brisman accomplished, researching, analyzing, and presenting in an interesting fashion how the bibliographic tools that librarians and scholars use in their every day work and research came into being. This was an immense task, to which Brisman dedicated the better part of his energy, most of his professional and personal time, for almost thirty years. Brisman might have been inspired by the work of Shlomo Shunami, who published the first edition of his *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies* in 1936, a work that was “received enthusiastically by librarians, bibliographers, and scholars in the field of Jewish studies” and which Shunami updated in 1965 “after close to three decades of constant efforts” (Brisman, 1977, p. 248).

What makes Brisman’s contribution unique is that it goes well beyond the unique compilation of bibliographies, with terse commentary on each entry, as Shunami had done. Right from the start (in 1977), he developed the perfect combination of scholarly rigor with an engaged—and engaging—narrative of the history of Jewish bibliography, in all its details. In the course of this narrative Brisman uncovered and shared with his readers a wealth of surprising and unknown details. In sum, he provided an in-depth critical analysis of the literary production of Jewish scholarship since the invention of printing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all those who have helped, in various ways, with this article: Arnold Band, Zachary M. Baker, Joan Biella, Piet W. van Boxel, Dov A. Brisman, David Gilner, Monique (Dybnis) Goldwasser, Miki Goral, Michael W. Grunberger, Deborah Katz, Eric Chaim Kline, Yisrael Meyerowitz, Dena Ordan, Peggy K. Pearlstein, Hana Pinshow, Benjamin Richler, Michal Saft, Bernard (Bernie) Scharfstein, Barbara Selya, Margaret Vermes, Naomi Wahrman, Laurel S. Wolfson, and Steven Zipperstein. Although I acknowledge their generous assistance, I am solely responsible for any errors that might occur in this article. Special thanks to David G. Hirsch, Librarian for Middle Eastern Studies, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA; Charlotte B. Brown, University Archivist, UCLA; and Monique Sugimoto, Archivist, University Archives, UCLA, each of whom each greatly facilitated my research for this article. I also acknowledge the material support I received from my current employer, The Library of Congress, and the sustained encouragement of my research interests by my supervisor, Lenore Bell, Team Leader, Hebraica Cataloging Team.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

(All from the UCLA Archives, Los Angeles, CA)

- Record Series 266, box 1, "News bulletins, 1961–66":
Robert Vosper's *Annual Report* for 1962–63.
- Record Series 377, box 338, folder "Cummings Collection 1981, 1985, 1993":
The entire folder is dedicated to the controversy with Theodore and Suzanne Cummings.
- Record Series 377, box 421, folder "Jewish Studies, 1991–1993":
Letter of Franklin D. Murphy to Theodore E. Cummings, January 24, 1963.
- Record Series 401, box 46, folder 33, "Library, 1960–1963":
Letter of Arnold Band to Wolf Leslau, dated December 4, 1962.
Report of Shimeon Brisman to Robert Vosper on his mission in Jerusalem, January 16, 1963.
Letter of Arnold Band to Kurt Worman, February, 10, 1963.
Letter of Arnold Band to Bob [Robert Vosper], dated "Wednesday 21 [February], 1963."
Letter of Arnold Band to Carlo [Golino], February 24, 1963.
Carbon copy of the letter from Franklin D. Murphy to Arnold Band, April, 1, 1963.
- Record Series 447, box 5, folder "Cummings 1968–1984":
Memorandum from Shimeon Brisman to Robert Vosper, July 2, 1964.
- Record Series 499, box 2, folder "Gifts, BRA-BRY, 1957–1985":
Letter of Robert Vosper to Shimeon Brisman, June 11, 1973.
- Record Series 499, box 5, folder 8, "Gifts Gr-Gz, 1950–1983":
Letter of Page Ackerman to Dr. Felix Guggenheim, November 20, 1973.
Estimate by Shimeon Brisman, November 7, 1973.
- Record Series 510, box 1, folder "Jewish Studies 1973–1984":
Undated application to the NEH.
- Record Series 510, box 10, folder "Special funds 1961–1970":
Memorandum from Norman Dudley, head of the Acquisitions Department, to the University Librarian, Robert Vosper, dated October 24, 1966.
- Record Series 510, box 12, Folder "Bibliographers' annual reports 1973–1974."
Record Series 510, box 12, Folder "Bibliographers' annual reports 1977–1978."
Record Series 510, box 12, Folder "Bibliographers' annual reports 1978–1980."
Record Series 510, box 13: "Getty/Vosper Collection Evaluation 1979."

ARCHIVES OF THE AUTHOR

- E-mail from Arnold Band, September 17, 1997.
Letter from Shimeon Brisman, March 17, 1998.
E-mail from Herbert Davidson, February 5, 2005.
E-mail from Philip E. Miller, February 23, 1998.
E-mail from Jill Storm, March 30, 2007.
Interview with Dov Brisman, April 2004.

PRINTED AND ONLINE SOURCES

(Note: See the Appendix for reviews of Shimeon Brisman's works.)

- Band, Arnold (1963). [Letters to the Editor]. Exchange of correspondence between Arnold Band and Getzel Kressel, *Davar*, 15 and 25 March 1963.
- Brisman, Dov Aaron (2001). *Sefer Be'er mayim: be'ur nifla 'al Bereshit Rabah*. [Brooklyn]: S. Brisman, [2001 or 2002].
- Brisman, Shimeon (1969). "The Jewish Studies Collection at UCLA," *Jewish Book Annual*, vol. 27 (1969–1970), pp. 42–47.
- Brisman, Shimeon (1988a). [Letter to the Editor], *Judaica Librarianship*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Spring 1988–Winter 1989), p. 138.
- Brisman, Shimeon (1988b). "Letter of Acceptance by the Recipient of the Mason Judaica Reference Book Award," *Judaica Librarianship*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Spring 1988–Winter 1989), pp. 185, 191.
- Brisman, Shimeon (2001). "Acceptance Speech," *Proceedings of the 36th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries* (La Jolla, CA, June 24–27, 2001), pp. 4–7. Accessible online at: <http://www.jewishlibraries.org/ajlweb/publications/proceedings/proceedings2001/randsawards.pdf> (accessed November 13, 2006).
- 'Etin, Y. (1959). "Entsiklopedyah hayah li-sefarim 'atikim," *Ha-Arets*, December 11, 1959.
- Genachowski, Dov (2006). "Kol keren rehov shebi-Yerushalayim maleh sefarim," *Et-Mol* 189 (Tishri 5667-September 2006), pp. 20–24.
- Hirsch, David G. (2001). "Presentation of Award to Shimeon Brisman," *Proceedings of the 36th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries* (La Jolla, CA, June 24–27, 2001), pp. 2–4. Accessible online at: <http://www.jewishlibraries.org/ajlweb/publications/proceedings/proceedings2001/randsawards.pdf> (accessed November 13, 2006).
- Jewish Community Library (Los Angeles) (1958a). *Bibliography of the Jewish Sociology Department: Dedicated to the Memory of Dr. Philip L. Seman*. Los Angeles: Jewish Community Library, 1958.
- Jewish Community Library (Los Angeles) (1958b). *Bibliography of Yiddish Periodicals*. Los Angeles: Jewish Community Library, Yiddish Language Department, 1958.
- News Bulletin, Friends of the UCLA Library* (1963). [On Brisman's acquisition of the Bamberger & Wahrman collection:] *News Bulletin, Friends of the UCLA Library*, no. 3 (October 1963), p. 4.
- Saraf, Uri (1963). "Osef sefarim 'Ivriyim le-Universitat Kaliforniyah," *Ha-Boker*, February 15, 1963.
- Shaham, D. (1950). *Perl fun undzer Toyre: margaliyot ha-Torah*. [New York]: Farlag "Perl," 711 [1950].
- Sheby, David (1978). "In Search of a Sephardic Tradition: A Family Named Sheby," *Toledot, the Journal of Jewish Genealogy*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Winter 1978–79), pp. 15–16.
- "Sifriyah Yerushalmit hashuvah nimkerah le-Artsot ha-Berit" (1963). Unsigned article, *Ha-Arets*, February 7, 1963.
- Singerman, Robert (1988). "Harold Mason Judaica Reference Book Award, 1987," *Judaica Librarianship*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Spring 1988–Winter 1989), p. 185.
- Tarnor, Norman (1991). "Three Gates Tehinno: A Seventeenth Century Yiddish Prayer," *Judaism*, vol. 40, no. 3 (1991), pp. 354–367.
- UCLA Librarian* (1963a), vol. 16, no. 8 (Feb. 21, 1963), p. 64.
- UCLA Librarian* (1963b), vol. 16, no. 17, pp. 141–142. [On Brisman's merit award.]
- UCLA Librarian* (1970), vol. 23, no. 12 (December 1970), p. 65.
- UCLA Librarian* (1993). "The Impact and Involvement of a Ubiquitous Jewish Studies Bibliographer: A Conversation with David Hirsch," *UCLA Librarian*, vol. 46, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1993), p. 8.
- UCLA Library Collections and Internet Resources in Jewish Studies*: <http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/url/colls/judaica/pages/about.html> (accessed November 18, 2005).

APPENDIX

Notated List of Critical Reviews of Shimeon Brisman's Works

Volume 1 (preliminary edition, 1973).

[Anonymous.] *Ḳiryat sefer*, vol. 49, no. 1–2 (Dec. 1973–March 1974), p. 8.

Very short descriptive review.

Volume 1—*A History and Guide to Judaic Bibliography* (Hebrew Union College Press, 1977).

[Anonymous.] *Booklist*, vol. 75, no. 20 (June 15, 1979), p. 1553.

A short, factual review, giving the general scope of the book and stating that “there is no comparable history and guide in Judaic bibliography.” The author’s credentials are noted, along with the observation that he has been working on this “scholarly yet nontechnical guide” for two decades. “Invaluable” for its targeted audience, libraries specializing in Jewish studies or serving advanced students in religious subjects.

[Anonymous.] *Choice*, vol. 15, no. 9 (Nov. 1978), pp. 1191–1192.

The reviewer introduced the project first, then the contents of the volume in a “telegraphic” style. Quite enthusiastic.

[Anonymous.] *Ḳiryat sefer*, vol. 53, no. 3 (July 1978), p. 392.

Very short review, only descriptive.

Bloomberg, Marty. *American Reference Book Annual*, vol. 10 (1979), p. 231.

A short, factual review, giving the general scope of the book, quoting from it, and stating its importance for a targeted audience. “The text is easy to read, and many of the technical details have been placed in footnotes . . . a scholarly and highly specialized work.”

Goodman, Harold. *Library Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 3 (July 1979), pp. 352–353.

A substantial review, more than a page in length, introducing the entire field of the literature of the Jewish people, the first bibliography of Johannes Buxtorf, and then presenting Brisman and his entire project. Goodman describes the contents of the book and praises its organization. “Unlike many other manuals and treatises of bibliography, the guide is well written and, in many places, almost gripping as the author skillfully treats us to anecdotes and lively sidelights on the materials discussed.”

J.J.D. [= ? J.J. Davis, OP (Ordo Paenitentiae, Dominican religious order), who signed another brief review on p. 436]. *Journal of Religious Education Association*, vol. 76, no. 6 (Nov.–Dec. 1981), p. 664.

“Briefly Noted,” described in four lines: “Full of valuable description and commentary, orderly arranged, in the best rabbinic and scribal traditions.”

Kochav, Sarah. “Bibliographies,” *Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1 (Spring 1991), pp. 139–140.

Mere citation of the work, in the context of a broader review.

Kressel, G. "Netivah ba-Okeanos ha-pirsumim," *Davar*, December 21, 1979, p. 19.

Kressel reviews the book as part of a review essay on four other books, quoting from the introduction, giving the credentials of the author and praising his education, training, and professionalism. Kressel explains the structure of the book and its uniqueness, mentioning Johannes Buxtorf as the author of the first bibliography, and concludes by expressing the hope that Brisman's work would be translated into Hebrew.

Marwick, Lawrence. *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, vol. 38, no. 36 (September 7, 1979), p. 370.

A short review. Marwick praises Brisman's book, introducing it as a "pioneering effort" and as an "indispensable work," describing the project and the contents of the volume, and saying in closing: "Combining sound scholarship and linguistic expertise with pedagogic skills, Mr. Brisman rendered a non-glamorous subject both interesting and informative."

Rudavsky, Arnona, "Sources for a Judaica Reference Collection," *Reference Services Review*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Fall 1984), pp. 23–30 (reference to Brisman on p. 23).

Part of a review essay, simply listing the contents of the volume.

Tuchman, Maurice. *Library Journal*, vol. 103 (Jan. 15, 1978), p. 152

A short review. Evaluates the volume as "the first systematic introduction to the field of Jewish bibliography." Describes the work as "selective," criticizes the absence of a bibliography, and finds the "criticism sometimes superficial."

Volume 2—A History and Guide to Judaic Encyclopedias and Lexicons (Hebrew Union College Press, 1987).

[Anonymous.] *Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie*, Jg. 36, Heft 1 (1989), pp. 59–60.

Simple mention.

[Anonymous.] *Kiryat sefer*, vol. 61, no. 4 (1986–1987), p. 589.

Very short review, only descriptive.

Baker, Zachary M. *Judaica Librarianship*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Spring 1988–Winter 1989), pp. 140–143.

A full-fledged, four-page article, with extensive quotes. Baker addresses the origins of the project, the table of contents of this volume, the structure of the chapters, detailed presentation of the first chapter, the "few minor omissions," and the issue of romanization. The most extensive and balanced review of any of the volumes of Brisman.

Freiband, Susan J. *American Reference Book Annual*, vol. 20 (1989), pp. 534–535.

A rather factual review, of medium size, indicating the purpose of the work, the sponsoring institutions, the credentials of the author, the contents of the volume and concluding that "this guide is an extremely valuable scholarly resource for Judaic studies."

Gordis, Patrick. *Shem Tov*, vol. 9, no. 4 (December 1993), pp. 5–7; vol. 10, no. 1 (March 1994), pp. 1–4.

The review has a target audience: "The purpose of this detail review . . . is to acquaint Jewish genealogists with the potential importance of this work . . . and to suggest . . . further valuable Judaic encyclopedias and lexicons omitted" in Volume Two. Overall, critical: "the most basic deficiency . . . which leads in turn to many other problems and uncertainties, is the lack of clear definitions . . . what exactly constitutes a Judaic

encyclopedia or lexicon in the mind of the author” and complains about the “inordinate number of typographical errors and other relatively minor inaccuracies.”

Havlin, Shelomoh Zalman. *‘Ale sefer*, vol. 15 (1989), p. 146.

A short review, both descriptive and evaluative, indicating the contents of the volume and praising the author for his effort and for uncovering so much information.

Kochav, Sarah. “Bibliographies,” *Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1 (Spring 1991), pp. 139–140.

Mere citation of the work in the context of a broader review.

Koppel, T. *Choice*, vol. 25, no. 8 (April 1988), p. 1220.

A short, mostly descriptive review, mentioning Volume One and Shlomo Shunami’s *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies*, ending with the evaluation: “Highly recommended for all academic and research libraries.”

Stampfer, Shaul. *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 9 (1993), pp. 319–320.

Begins by stating that “this volume . . . will be an indispensable guide” to Jewish bibliography, then reviews the table of contents, noting that “this book is richer than a reading of its table of contents would indicate.” Praises Brisman for his fascinating introductions to the works he reviewed and to their authors and for his high standards in evaluating encyclopedias and lexicons. An “extremely valuable reference guide.”

Wolf, George. *Judaica Book News*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1989), pp. 43–44.

Introduces the author, the table of contents, and the structure of each chapter. Considers the first chapter “the best and most thorough section in the whole book.” Devotes four paragraphs (out of ten) to books Brisman failed to include, but concludes that the book is “readable and interesting” and is “a major contribution to the study of Judaica and Jewish bibliography.”

Volume 3—A History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances, Part 1, Dictionaries (Ktav, 2000)

[Anonymous.] *Reference and Research Book News*, vol. 15, no. 4 (November 2000), p. 196.

A short summary of scope of the volume. No evaluation.

Kohn, Roger S. *Judaica Librarianship*, vol. 13 (2007), pp. 41–42.

Quotes from the preface about the scope of the volume, then describes its contents. Notes the limitations of the index, and the exclusion of books published in the 1990s. Praises the “thoroughness and extreme attention to the bibliographical details.”

Kranzler, David. *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*, vol. 38, no. 10 (June 2001), p. 1761.

Considers the volume “fully on par in quality with the earlier volumes . . . Among the best features . . . are the interesting biographical and historical background provided for each entry . . . written for general readers, they reveal the author’s awesome mastery of the field.” Complains about the small type and narrow margins.

Rothschild, Jean-Pierre, *Revue des études juives*, vol. 161, no. 1–2 (January–June 2002), pp. 291–292.

A two-page review, detailing the contents of this volume, pointing out the extensive footnotes (especially the references to book reviews of the works analyzed by Brisman), criticizing the structure of the volume, and egregious lacunae, the faulty index, and considering the volume a disappointing work.

Roger S. Kohn is a member of the Hebraica Cataloging Team at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC. From 1991 to 1998 he served as the Reinhard Family Curator of Judaica and Hebraica Collections in the Stanford University Libraries.